

SECRET OF LBJ ELECTION TO SENATE

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The "recount" in Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County in the August 28, 1948 run-off primary election was the deciding factor in starting LBJ on his way to the White House, where he is now serving as the 36th President of the United States. At that time, LBJ was concluding his fifth term representing the 10th Congressional District of Texas in the House of Representatives in Washington, where LBJ was elected first in 1937.

In the Democratic Party's July 24, 1948 primary election in Texas, ex-Governor Coke Stevenson received 477,077 votes on a state-wide basis, giving ex-Governor Coke Stevenson a 71,470 state-wide majority. Ex-Governor Coke Stevenson's 477,077 votes lacked a few votes of being a majority of all votes for the five candidates in the Democratic Party's July 24, 1948 state-wide primary election. However, because ex-Governor Coke Stevenson lacked those few votes, under the rules of the Democratic Party in Texas, having the largest number of votes, but not having a majority of all votes in the state-wide July 24, 1948 election, he was obliged to enter a run-off primary election against LBJ who received the next largest number of votes in the July 24, 1948 primary election. The date for that run-off primary election was set to take place on August 28, 1948.

The supporters of LBJ were determined to conduct a victorious campaign at any cost, and for that purpose mobilized the most resourceful Democrats in the entire State of Texas for a whirlwind campaign. LBJ's first move was to name John Connally his manager in that campaign. John Connally is presently Governor of the State of Texas. John Connally first began to work for LBJ in the early days of the New Deal of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. When President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the National Youth Administration (NYA), he named LBJ director for the State of Texas.

John Connally advanced himself in the intervening years as a political crony of LBJ. John Connally is now Governor of the State of Texas. LBJ was elected to Congress in 1937 for the first time. John Connally also went to Washington at that time but as an important lobbyist for Texas gas and oil interests, making many political cronies.

LBJ enlisted John Coffey to direct his August 28, 1948 run-off primary election campaign. John Coffey became chief counsel for Billy Sol Estes and is most highly regarded in Texas as a foremost campaign strategist. At that time, John Coffey was also the Texas campaign manager for President Harry S. Truman, who in 1948 was seeking election for the first time on his own account, as President of the United States. President Harry S. Truman was elevated from the office of Vice-President to the office of President of the United States in 1945 through the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, exactly as LBJ was.

LBJ's August 28, 1948 run-off primary election campaign against ex-Governor Coke Stevenson was so vigorously conducted by LBJ's political cronies that ex-Governor Coke Stevenson's 71,470 state-wide majority in the July 24, 1948 Democratic Party's primary election dwindled to a mere 113 vote state-wide majority in the August 28, 1948 run-off primary election. Nevertheless, LBJ went on the air that night and thanked his friends for his victory, broadcasting to them "The Progressive people of Texas have won a hard fight, but we have won and can go forward. As your new United States Senator, I will serve you, etc." But as he spoke those words, LBJ had not won the August 28, 1948 Democratic Party's run-off primary election. LBJ could not know he was the candidate of the Democratic Party for election to the United States Senate in the nation-wide November 1948 general election.

On that very night, the Dallas Daily News in a midnight edition, reporting directly from Jim Wells County, published that John Connally had arrived on the scene in Jim Wells County and had reported he had discovered that the votes in some precincts in

Jim Wells County had previously been incorrectly reported in earlier tabulations, and that therefore the official and final tabulation of the Democratic Party's August 28, 1948 run-off primary election must now be delayed indefinitely for further "recount."

An hour or so later, the reporter for the Dallas Daily News filed a second dispatch which alarmed LBJ's political cronies directing LBJ's August 28, 1948 run-off primary election campaign against ex-Governor Coke Stevenson. In the second dispatch, the Dallas Daily News reported that Luis Salas, the presiding election judge for Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County, which included the county seat of Alice, said that although only 600 ballots had been issued for Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County, that the votes tabulated for Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County showed 768 voted for LBJ and 60 for ex-Governor Coke Stevenson, a total of 828 votes. The presiding election judge Luis Salas, expressed no interest in explaining the discrepancy between only 600 ballots issued to Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County and the 828 votes reported for Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County, the 768 votes reported for LBJ and the 60 votes reported for ex-Governor Coke Stevenson. Furthermore, Luis Salas, the presiding election judge in Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County, denied having anything to do with tabulating the votes of the August 28, 1948 run-off election.

The Dallas Daily News further reported that the ballot box of Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County had been locked in the vault of the Parr Bank. Rumors were circulating that the ballot box of Precinct No. 13 of Jim Wells County was locked in the vault of Parr Bank and would not be brought out and officially reported until it was known exactly how many votes were needed to make LBJ a purported winner of the August 28, 1948 run-off primary election which followed the state-wide July 24, 1948 primary election.

Thinking the matter over carefully, ex-Governor Coke Stevenson decided to proceed to Jim Wells County himself, and to assume personal direction of his campaign problems, taking with him Kellis Dibrell and James Gardner, two of his loyal workers. Ex-Governor Coke Stevenson promptly moved his forces into Jim Wells County, going directly to Alice, the county capital, after a brief conference held by him in Duval County with George Parr, who protested his innocence.

A three-man sub-committee of the Texas State Democratic Executive Committee had previously been set up in Austin to receive and officially tabulate all Democratic Party primary election results. This sub-committee reported on September 3, 1948 that ex-Governor Coke Stevenson had been elected by a 113 vote majority in the August 28, 1948 Democratic Party's run-off primary election.

Within a matter of hours after this report was released as official and final by the Texas State Democratic Executive Committee in Austin, John Connally immediately refuted it with a release from Alice, the county capital of Jim Wells County, in which he stated that the ballot box of Precinct No. 13 in Jim Wells County had been "recounted," and errors had been discovered that gave LBJ 201 additional votes. According to John Connally's September 3, 1948 "recount" LBJ received 967 votes against 61 votes received by ex-Governor Coke Stevenson. John Connally's September 3, 1948 alleged "recount" gave LBJ a purported state-wide majority of only 87 votes in the August 28, 1948 run-off primary election and the nomination as the Democratic Party's candidate in the State of Texas for United States Senator in the November 1948 general election.

In the Democratic Party's primary election on July 24, 1948, a new County Executive Committee had been elected for Jim Wells County, of which Harry Adams was Chairman and H. L. Poole was Secretary. Under the laws of Texas, and following the established custom of the Democratic Party in Texas; the new County Executive Committee must take immediate possession of Democratic Party primary election returns, as their legal and traditional custodian.

However, in spite of a legal and traditional obligation to surrender to the new County Executive Committee as official and legal custodian, the returns of the August 28, 1948 run-off primary, the old County Executive Committee declined to surrender them to Chairman Adams and Secretary Poole although repeatedly demanded. The Secretary of the old County Executive Committee was Thomas Donald, an employee of the Parr bank, where he had placed the ballot box of Precinct No. 13 of Jim Wells County in the vault of that bank, violating Texas law.

Thereupon, Chairman Adams and Secretary Poole aligned themselves completely with ex-Governor Coke Stevenson's forces. Chairman Adams and Secretary Poole frankly confessed that neither of them had been able to examine the contents of the ballot box of Precinct No. 13 of Jim Wells County, although the new County Executive Committee was its custodian under laws of the State of Texas and tradition of the Democratic Party in all primary elections.

Chairman Adams and Secretary Poole were present in the Parr bank when John Connally and Thomas Donald "recounted" the ballot box of Precinct No. 13 of Jim Wells County. They managed to get close enough to the "recount" then in progress there, to notice about 200 names had recently been added to the list of 800 registered voters, about 200 names recently and hastily added to the list of 800 names on the official list of registered voters. They noted that about 200 names recently added to the list had been added in alphabetical order, and that all the names were in identical handwriting, and written with green ink, while the names on the official list of the 800 registered voters were not in alphabetical order, nor were they written in the same handwriting, and were written with black ink.

Chairman Adams of the County Executive Committee turned to ex-Governor Coke Stevenson and said, "It is a crooked deal, and I pledge you all my power to get to the bottom of it." They thereupon combined their forces to demand another look at the voters list of Precinct No. 13 of Jim Wells County on the following morning. They anticipated they would be permitted to copy names from the list of voters as they appeared there, in a move for further investigating the possibility of obtaining a court order directing John Connally and Thomas Donald to deliver into their physical possession the ballot box of Precinct No. 13 of Jim Wells County, as official and legal representatives of the new County Executive Committee, the legal and official custodian for Democratic Party primary returns.

Kellis Dibrell and James Gardner, former FBI agents and at that time practicing attorneys, were ex-Governor Coke Stevenson's workers. They immediately telephoned trusted friends who were properly trained to assist them in making a hasty investigation of persons selected from the 200 added names on that list, asking their friends to join them on the following day to help them with their task. The local newspapers got wind of their telephone calls, and interpreted them as calls for armed recruits to forcibly take possession of the ballot box of Precinct No. 13 of Jim Wells County, when the bank opened the next day. The reporters conjured up the prospect of a pitched battle the next day, as it was not unusual for differences of opinion to be settled with pistols in this area of Texas, and battle fever was then mounting at an alarming rate and things looked bad.

Ex-Governor Coke Stevenson, three times governor of the State of Texas, knew the procedure to be followed under the circumstances, and sent an urgent call to the Adjutant General of the State of Texas at Austin for a sufficient force of Texas Rangers to maintain the peace and avoid bloodshed. As the time approached on the following morning for the bank doors to open, the prospect for shooting it out appeared excellent. The Parr forces were ready for business. Five riflemen, trailing Winchester carbines at ready, lolled casually in skirmish formation across the narrow street, in front